



## Skokholm, Avebury, Wiltshire

### Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report





**SKOKHOLM, AVEBURY,  
WILTSHIRE**

**Archaeological Evaluation  
and Watching Brief  
Report**

Prepared for:

**Mr & Mrs Paul Dobson**  
Becketts  
Baydon  
Marlborough  
Wiltshire  
SN8 2H2

by:

**Wessex Archaeology**  
Portway House  
Old Sarum Park  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP4 6EB

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## QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE		ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	<b>N/A</b>	NGR		<b>443953 115431</b>	

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I= Internal Draft E= External Draft F= Final

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**Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Project Background .....	1
1.2	Scope of Document.....	1
1.3	Site Location, Topography and Geology .....	2
<b>2</b>	<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Introduction.....	2
2.2	Summary of designated heritage assets .....	2
<b>3</b>	<b>AIMS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1	Field Evaluation.....	3
3.2	Watching Brief .....	3
<b>4</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	3
4.2	Evaluation.....	4
4.3	Watching Brief .....	4
4.4	Recording .....	4
<b>5</b>	<b>RESULTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	5
5.2	Field Evaluation.....	5
5.3	Watching brief .....	5
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>ARCHIVE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>APPENDIX 1: OASIS RECORD FORM.....</b>	<b>6</b>
10.1	OASIS ID: wessexar1-100401.....	6

**Figure 1** Site and Watching Brief location plan

**Figure 2** Representative section

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**Skokholm, Avebury,  
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**Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Paul Dobson, to undertake an archaeological evaluation and watching brief at Skokholm, Green Street, Avebury, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference 410659 170108. Planning permission has been granted by Wiltshire Council for the demolition of the existing building and construction of a new dwelling on condition that a programme of archaeological works was undertaken.

The Site lies within the UNESCO Avebury World Heritage Site and close to known prehistoric monuments and features, many of which are Scheduled Monuments, including the Avebury henge and stone circle.

Prior to any ground works associated with construction of the building, a single 6.5m x 1.85m evaluation trench was machine excavated. Although no archaeological features or finds were recorded, the Wiltshire Council Archaeologist advised an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during the initial groundworks on the Site.

Despite the archaeological potential of the Site, no archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded during the archaeological works.

The evaluation was carried out on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2011 and watching brief on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

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**Skokholm, Avebury,  
Wiltshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation  
and Watching Brief  
Report**

**Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Mr & Mrs Paul Dobson, who commissioned the project. Thanks are also due to David Vaughan of Wiltshire Council who monitored the excavations on behalf of the local authority.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Piotr Orczewski who also compiled this report. Illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman. Sue Farr managed the project on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.

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**Skokholm, Avebury,  
Wiltshire****Archaeological Evaluation  
and Watching Brief  
Report****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dobson (the Client), to undertake archaeological fieldwork comprising a field evaluation and watching brief at Skokholm, Green Street, Avebury, Wiltshire (**Figure 1**), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 410659, 170108, (hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 The Site lies within the UNESCO Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) and close to known prehistoric monuments and features, many of which are Scheduled Monuments (SM), including the Avebury henge and stone circle.
- 1.1.3 Planning permission was granted by Wiltshire Council for the demolition of the existing wooden bungalow and shed and construction of a new build house (ref: E/10/1568/FUL).
- 1.1.4 Following consultation with the Wiltshire Council Assistant County Archaeologist, an Archaeological Brief was prepared (WCA 2011) requiring archaeological evaluation of the Site. The brief recommended that a 5% evaluation of the development area should be undertaken as a condition of planning consent.
- 1.1.5 Condition 2 of the planning consent states: No development shall commence within the area indicated (proposed development site) until: a) A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and b) The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 1.1.6 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing the evaluation (WA 2011a) and subsequent watching brief (WA 2011b) methodology was prepared by Wessex Archaeology. Each WSI detailed the strategy, methodology and standards to be employed and was in keeping with the relevant standards and guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists. Both documents were submitted to and approved by the Wiltshire Assistant County Archaeologist before the commencement of fieldwork.

**1.2 Scope of Document**

- 1.2.1 This report summarises the strategy and methodology by which Wessex Archaeology implemented the archaeological fieldwork (field evaluation and watching brief). In format and content it conforms with current best practice and to the guidance outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE, English Heritage 2006) and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008).

### 1.3 Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 1.3.1 The Site is bounded to the north by Green Street (Herepath), to the south by the grounds of a larger residential property, to the west by mature trees and to the east by a paddock. It lies approximately 200m to the east of Avebury Henge and beyond the historic core of the village (**Figure 1**).
- 1.3.2 The Site lies at an elevation of c. 162m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and is situated at the northern extent of a broad dry valley, to the south of an elevated east-west spur extending west from Overton Down.
- 1.3.3 The underlying geology is Middle Chalk of the Upper Cretaceous period (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 266).

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 An Historic Environment Appraisal (Wessex Archaeology 2010) was prepared which assessed the archaeological and historical background to the Site, the results of which are briefly summarised below.
- 2.1.2 Although no finds or features are recorded on the Wiltshire and Swindon Sites and Monuments Record (WSMR) within the Site itself, Skokholm is located within an internationally important prehistoric ritual landscape, approximately 200m to the east of Avebury Henge and adjacent to a trackway which may have formed an approach to the original eastern entrance of the monument.
- 2.1.3 It is situated within a well documented area of intensive Neolithic and Bronze Age activity, and consequently it was concluded that an enhanced potential for the presence of archaeological features, finds and deposits existed within the Site.

### 2.2 Summary of designated heritage assets

- 2.2.1 There are two Scheduled Monuments within 250m of the Site. Collectively Avebury Henge and stone circles is one of six Guardianship Monuments (*i.e.* in the care of the State) which lie within the WHS.
- 2.2.2 Green Bank Bowl Barrow, is a Scheduled Monument representative of a Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age funerary monument, and is situated c. 50m south-east of the Site. The monument is well preserved and survives as a mound with a diameter of 26m, surviving to a height of up to 3.6m. Surrounding the barrow is an infilled construction ditch up to 3m wide which survives as a buried feature.
- 2.2.3 Excluding the two Scheduled Monuments described above, there are a further 17 Scheduled Monuments within 1km of the Site. These are listed below
- A round barrow cemetery consisting of nine (although only eight are listed in the Scheduling) separate barrows situated on the crest of Waden Hill, c. 700m south-west of the Site.
  - The West Kennet Avenue, one of the six Guardianship Monuments situated c. 500m south-west of the Site. Formed by two near parallel rows of standing sarsen stones at its northern end, and as a linear earthwork bank at the southern end.



- Falkner's Circle situated c. 850m south of the Site and represents a Neolithic stone circle defined by a single standing stone within a hedgerow. An earlier plan by W. Long shows the circle comprised at least twelve standing stones.
- A 'doubtful' ditched long barrow or possible round barrow, situated c. 950m south of the Site.
- A bell barrow on Avebury Down, situated c. 900m north-east of the Site.
- A bowl barrow on Avebury Down, located c. 750m north-east of the Site. The barrow mound presently stands up to 0.4m high and was found to contain Bronze Age material when excavated by antiquarians in 1849.
- A bowl barrow on Avebury Down, located c. 800m east of the Site. The barrow mound presently stands up to 0.40m high.
- Medieval village remains, located c. 980m west of the Site. The remains comprise a series of earthworks recorded by the RCHME.
- A linear bank and ditch divided into three extant sections forming part of a linear boundary ditch, situated c. 950m north-east of the Site

### **3 AIMS**

#### **3.1 Field Evaluation**

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological field evaluation were to:

- Clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be threatened by development.
- Identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site.
- Assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- Produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation and watching brief in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential

#### **3.2 Watching Brief**

3.2.1 The watching brief aimed to:

- Provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the proposed footprint of the house
- Investigate and record any archaeological material to an appropriate level.

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the standards set out within the WSI (WA 2011a, 2011b) and standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008), excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.

## 4.2 Evaluation

- 4.2.1 The field evaluation comprised the machine excavation of a single trial trench measuring 6.5m in length and 1.85m wide and was positioned within the proposed footprint of the new building (**Figure 1**).
- 4.2.2 Prior to machine excavation, the trench location was scanned by Wessex Archaeology using a cable tracing device. An electrical cable was identified within the footprint of the trench and was not damaged during the excavations.
- 4.2.3 The trial trench was excavated using a 5 tonne 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. Machine excavation continued until the top of natural deposits were encountered.
- 4.2.4 When recording of the trench was completed to the satisfaction of the Assistant County Archaeologist, it was backfilled using the excavated material in the approximate order in which it was excavated and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.
- 4.2.5 All archaeological groundworks were surveyed and tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid using GPS surveying equipment.

## 4.3 Watching Brief

- 4.3.1 A watching brief was carried out on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011 during the excavation of the proposed building footprint.
- 4.3.2 A mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used during the excavations and monitored by an experienced archaeologist.
- 4.3.3 Excavated material was visually examined for archaeological material.

## 4.4 Recording

- 4.4.1 A complete drawn record of the excavated trench was compiled. This included a representative section drawn to appropriate scale (1:10) with reference to a Site grid tied to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels was calculated and the section was annotated with OD heights.
- 4.4.2 A photographic record was maintained during both the field evaluation and watching brief using a digital camera equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 mega pixels. As part of the post excavation process digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes which will embed appropriate metadata within the image and ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

## 5 RESULTS

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Trench and contextual information is contained in **Appendix 1**. The evaluation trench is displayed on **Figure 1**.

### 5.2 Field Evaluation

5.2.1 A single evaluation trench measuring 6.5m x 1.85m was located within the footprint of the proposed building.

5.2.2 The topsoil comprised a medium brown grey, silty loam which was, on average, 0.25m deep and overlay a medium red brown, silty clay subsoil with common flint inclusions. The natural geology comprised a medium red-brown silty clay with periglacial loose chalk and gravel inclusions and was reached at a depth of 0.45m below the existing ground surface (**Figure 2**).

5.2.3 A single electrical cable and two drain pipes were uncovered during excavation. All were left intact and backfilled.

5.2.4 No archaeological features or finds were revealed within the evaluation trench.

### 5.3 Watching Brief

5.3.1 An area of approximately 155 sq. m. was machine excavated to the level of natural chalk in the southern part of the building footprint, and natural medium brown red, silty clay across the rest of Site. Overlying the natural a similar stratigraphy to that recorded in the evaluation trench was recorded.

5.3.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were identified during the watching brief.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the Site, given its proximity to Avebury Henge and a number of other important prehistoric funerary monuments, no archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded either by the evaluation trench, or during the subsequent watching brief maintained during initial stripping within the footprint of the new build.

## 7 ARCHIVE

7.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). The archive, including plans, photographs and written records, are currently held at the Wessex Archaeology offices under the project code 71561.

## 8 REFERENCES

FYFOD Project (1995) The Ridgeway in the Avebury World Heritage Site – An Archaeological and Historical Assessment. Unpublished Report for English Heritage. Newcastle University.

Lawson, A.J. (2001) Late Glacial and Early Post-Glacial in *Archaeological Research Agenda for the Avebury World Heritage Site*, Avebury Archaeological & Historical Research Group, Trust for Wessex Archaeology, pp 6-8.

Smith, I.F. (1965) *Windmill Hill and Avebury: Excavations by Alexander Keiller, 1925-1939*. Oxford: Clarendon Press

Malone, C. (1989) *Avebury*, Batsford and English Heritage.

Wessex Archaeology (2010) 'Skokholm', *Green Street, Avebury, Wiltshire Historic Environment Appraisal* Unpublished WA report 75160.01

Wessex Archaeology (2011a)

## 9 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Level (m aOD)
001	Layer	Topsoil	161.81
002	Layer	Subsoil	161.56
003	Layer	Natural Substrate	161.11

## 10 APPENDIX 1: OASIS RECORD FORM

### 10.1 OASIS ID: wessexar1-100401

#### Project details

Project name            Skokholm, Green Street, Avebury

Short description of the project    Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Paul Dobson, to undertake an archaeological evaluation and watching brief at Skokholm, Green Street, Avebury, Wiltshire, centred on National Grid Reference 410659 170108. Planning permission has been granted by Wiltshire Council for the demolition of the existing building and construction of a new dwelling on condition that a programme of archaeological works was undertaken. The Site lies within the UNESCO Avebury World Heritage Site and close to known prehistoric monuments and features, many of which are Scheduled Monuments, including the Avebury henge and stone circle. Prior to any ground works associated with construction of the

building, a single 6.5m x 1.85m evaluation trench was machine excavated. Although no archaeological features or finds were recorded, the Wiltshire Council Archaeologist advised an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during the initial groundworks on the Site. Despite the archaeological potential of the Site, no archaeological deposits, features or finds were recorded during the archaeological works undertaken. The evaluation was carried out on the 9th of March and watching brief on the 29th of March.

Project dates	Start: 09-03-2011 End: 06-05-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any project codes	associated reference 71561 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	World Heritage Site
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods techniques	& 'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Rural residential
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	WILTSHIRE KENNET AVEBURY Skokholm, Green Street, Avebury

Postcode                    SN8 1RE

Study area                    0.10 Hectares

Site coordinates            410659 170108 410659 00 00 N 170108 00 00 E Point

Height OD / Depth        Min: 161.11m Max: 161.81m

### Project creators

Name                        of Wessex Archaeology  
Organisation

Project                    brief Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District  
originator                    Archaeologist)

Project                    design Wessex Archaeology  
originator

Project                    Sue Farr  
director/manager

Project supervisor        Piotr Orczewski

Type                        of Developer  
sponsor/funding  
body

### Project archives

Physical                    Archive No  
Exists?

Digital                    Archive Alexander Keiller Museum  
recipient

Digital                    Media 'Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets','Survey','Text'  
available

Paper                        Archive Alexander Keiller Museum  
recipient

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Paper available Media 'Context sheet','Drawing','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Skokholm, Green Street, Avebury, Wiltshire

Author(s)/Editor(s) Orczewski, P

Other bibliographic details 75161

Date 2011

Issuer or publisher Wessex Archaeology

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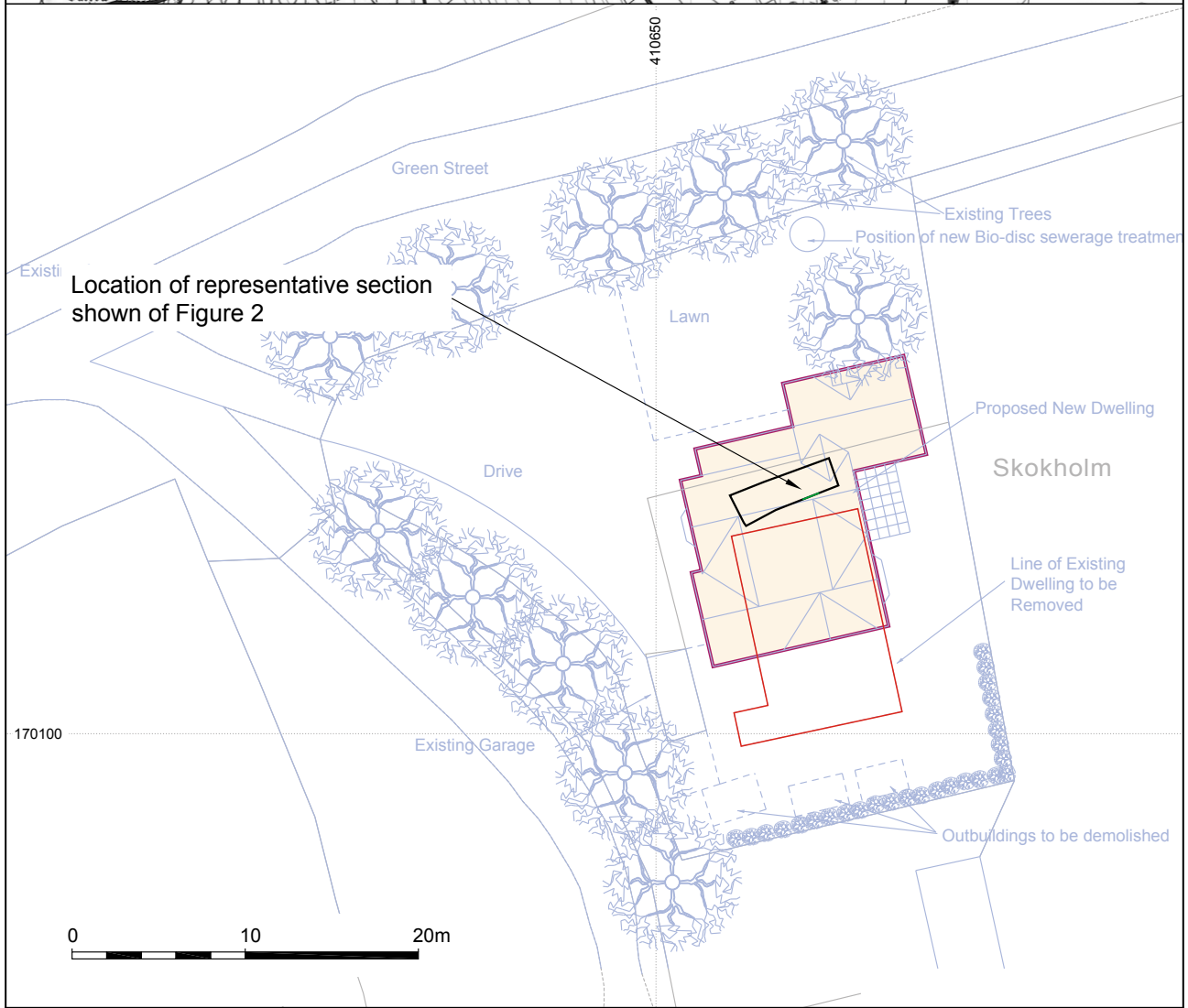
Description Grey literature client report

URL <http://www.oasis.ac.uk>

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Entered on 5 May 2011



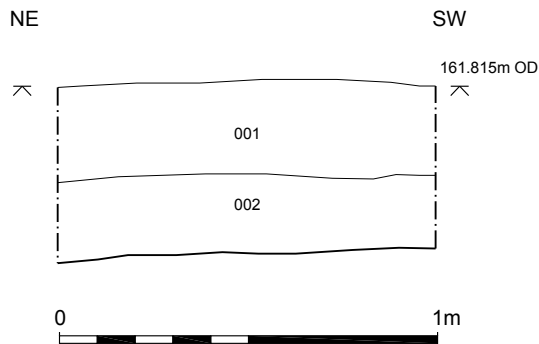
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing building</li> <li>Watching brief area:</li> <li>Footprint of new building</li> <li>Evaluation trench</li> </ul>	<p>Reproduced from the 2007 Ordnance Survey 1:25 000 Explorer® map with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP4 6EB. Licence Number: 100028190. Digital data reproduced from Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright 2011. All rights reserved. Reference Number: 100020449. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.</p>		
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Site location, evaluation trench and watching brief area

Figure 1





North-facing representative section

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**WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.**

**Registered Head Office:** Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 [info@wessexarch.co.uk](mailto:info@wessexarch.co.uk)

Regional offices in **Edinburgh, Rochester and Sheffield**

For more information visit [www.wessexarch.co.uk](http://www.wessexarch.co.uk)

